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Whisperings of my Muse

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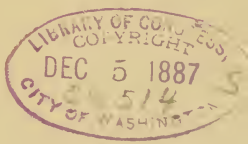
of

My Muse.

BY

REBECCA W. MADISON.



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Inscribed
to
All Who Love
the
Prince of Peace.

MY MUSE.

I love the sweet-voiced Muse I dare call mine,
And almost bow in rev'rence at her shrine;
E'en in my childhood, my soul she would thrill
With vague, curious fancies, — treasured still, —
And when hearing stories of some former day,
With bold assurance I would simply say,
"Then I was rolling around with the clouds,
Playing with stars, and talking to God."
It was not merely a childish thought,
'Twas a beautiful fancy my loved Muse brought.
My pleasures and sorrows to her I tell,
As she holds o'er my mind a potent spell;
Then she weaves me fancies both wild and weird,
Until joy is deepened, or pain is cheered;
But when Summer's beauty from earth has fled,
When leaves and flowers are faded and dead,
When the insect's hum is hushed and o'er,
When the storm-blasts in fury howl and roar,
When the air is full of snow-flakes white,
And the wind is blowing them left and right,
'Tis then like a being from fairy-land,
She holds o'er my spirit a magic wand,
And sings me songs of melody sweet,
That make my heart with rapture beat;
'Tis then in the ardor of fervent love,
I count her an angel direct from above,
And with thankful heart my praise is given,
For my sweet Muse, the gift of Heaven.

"COUNT YOUR MAIRCIES."

"Count your maircies," as the old woman said,
And ere you have finished you will be dead;
For thick and fast are the "maircies" sent,
They cease not even when life is spent.
If to "count your maircies" you are inclined,
The ghost of a moment you will not find,
For counting miseries or nursing care,
You will even doubt that you have your share.

THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

Father, accept a nation's praise
For plenteous crops and peaceful days,
For a prosperous and pleasant land,
Where millions strong in freedom stand.

For the under-current of love, dear Lord,
Through the nation flowing deep and broad;
Increase its calm, majestic strength,
Till love be our one grand crown at length.

Uphold us, for in Thee we trust;
Uplift us, till from us we thrust
All evil, as a thing of death,
And find in Thee our chiefest wealth.

Protect us, be our shield and might,
And let Thy countenance be our light;
Direct us, be Thy word our guide,
That we become as gold well tried.

Reign o'er us, be our honored King,
Smile on the tribute that we bring;
Our hearts unite in joyful praise,
We thank Thee for Thanksgiving days.

NO ONE CAN TELL.

[In the following poem the fifth stanza only is "peculiar to itself"; the rhymes of the first stanza occurring in the sixth; those of the third in the seventh; those of the second in the fourth and eighth, with the order reversed.]

No one can tell the anguish,
No one can speak the woe,
Of defiled and wretched mortals
Who no pardon know;

Of a sinner unforgiven,
With no hope of gaining Heaven,
Passing downward to the grave
Satan's trembling, tortured slave;
Yielding ever to temptation,
Hastening on, in condemnation;
In our Lord no beauty seeing,
From His calls forever fleeing;
To the Prince of Darkness clinging,
From the soul all warnings flinging;
Traveling in the broad highway,—
Where so many sadly stray,—
That to shame and sorrow leads,
Angered that the Spirit pleads.

No one can tell the gladness,
No one can speak the joy,
Of the humble Christian
In his Lord's employ;

Of the child of Heaven
Whose sins are all forgiven;
Who, unlike the trembling slave,
Passes downward to the grave
Freed from sin's sad condemnation,
Shielded even through temptation;
From the Prince of Darkness fleeing,
In our Lord all beauty seeing;
From him ever evil flinging,
To the Lamb of Calvary clinging, —
Lest, like others, he may stray
From the strait and narrow way, —
Rejoicing that the Spirit pleads,
Following whereso'er He leads.

No one can tell the pity,
No one can speak the love,
Of our dear Redeemer
In the realms above,

For the wretched mortals
Who no pardon know;
Who, defiled, despairing,
Bear unspoken woe.

When they seek His service,
He will them employ,
And for wages give them
Life, and peace, and joy:

And with sins forgiven,
They shall be heirs of Heaven.
He will take the terrors from the grave,
Break the bonds which them enslave;
Guide them when they meet temptation,
Free them from sin's condemnation,
And each danger for them seeing,
While they are from darkness fleeing,
Keep them, — if to Him they 're clinging,
And the tempter from them flinging, —
In the strait and narrow way,
Nevermore from it to stray.
Into this life the Spirit leads
Those who heed Him when He pleads.

STRAIT AND STRAIGHT.

[In this poem the first as well as the last words of the lines rhyme, the same rhymes being used in the first as in the third stanza, and in the second as in the fourth, with the order reversed.]

Strait and narrow is the way
  Leading to perfection;
Great our need to ever pray,
  Pleading for protection.

There's no true home but Christ's abode,
  No soul-rest but in Heaven;
Prayer is our safety on the road,
  So seldom straight, so oft uneven.

Great the sin to never pray,
  Pleading for protection;
Straight it makes the broad highway
  Leading from perfection.

Prayer is no safety on that road
  So seldom strait, so often even,
There none has claim to Christ's abode,
  No pledge of rest in Heaven.

"I CAN TRUST HIM NOW."

[The dying words of a Christian lady who had felt very despondent at the near approach of death, having remarked but a short time before that she could "not see beyond the grave."]

Death's nearness has made heavy a gentle mother's heart,
With home, with life, with dear ones, she knows she soon must part.
It has been her life's endeavor to serve the heavenly King —
Oh, why at this dread moment does He fail to comfort bring?

She has felt Christ's loving mercy, His willingness to save,
Yet her dimmed and clouded vision sees "naught beyond the grave".
Darker, darker grows the valley, — must she enter it alone?
Where can be the dear Redeemer, did He not for her atone?

Deeper, deeper are the waters, colder, colder runs the stream.
Is it chill and dark in Heaven that no light for her can gleam?
Sadly anxious ones are watching the beloved mother's face;
As they watch, with joy it brightens, joy born alone of grace

"I can trust Him now." Doubt, dread, and darkness forever are gone.
Brighter, brighter grows the valley, Christ has come to claim His own;
Backward, backward roll the billows from the timid, shrinking feet,
And the mother enters in perfect peace, eternal rest,
So sweet, so sweet!

CHRISTMAS.

'Tis well that Christ is honored upon the earth to-day,
That Christian homes are mirthful, and children's hearts are gay;
'Tis well the air with wishes cheerily given has rung,
That praises sweet and joyous to Jesus have been sung

And in thought I love to wander down through the ages gone,
To when angels brought the tidings — that the promised King was born —
Unto the startled shepherds in the stillness of the night,
While the glory of the Highest o'er them shone in hallowed light:
The flocks are left to wander, the moments must not waste,
To do the Christ-child homage the rejoicing shepherds haste.

I see the wise men coming, that they may tribute pay,
And the mystical star of the East guiding them on the way;
I watch them kneel in worship before the infant King,
I note their looks of gladness, and the costly gifts they bring;
I see them cast before Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh,
While love, joy, and devotion their hearts with rapture stir.

But the visions slowly fade away, I return from the distant past,
From the sacred scenes that a halo have over the centuries cast, —
With a thought of His gifts while dying, thorns, and wormwood, and gall,
Of the rising dead, and the rending rocks, and the darkness over all; —
Home to the cheerful present, with the sweet but solemn thought,
The blood of this Christ-King, Jesus, Heaven for us has bought.

FAREWELL THOUGHTS FOR THE OLD YEAR.

The old year now is dying,
The sun is sinking low,
The moments quickly flying,
As fades the sunset's glow.

The shades e'en now are deep'ning,
And night will soon be here;
Dies peacefully the evening,
The last one of the year.

When next we see the sunlight,
The old year will be gone;
In silence, in the midnight,
A new year will be born.

The twelvemonth's joy and sorrow
That to our lot were cast,
When we wake from sleep to-morrow
Will be forever past.

The twelvemonth that is coming
May bring we know not what;
With keenest pain and anguish
For us it may be fraught.

Yet, like the present moment,
They too will pass away,
For Time moves ever onward,
His feet we may not stay.

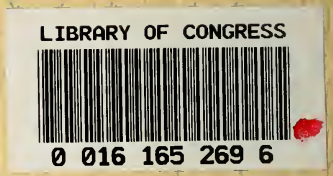
Then let us gladly welcome
The new year all unknown,
With praises to the Giver
That its myst'ries are not shown.

And when our years are ended,
When we of earth take leave,
May we go without a murmur,
Like this calm, peaceful eve.

Massillon, Ohio, 1874.

INVOCATION.

O, loving God, forgive
Our doubting and complaining;
Give us the will and grace
To live Thy praises
In true gratefulness
For all the precious gifts
Bestowed upon us;
For the sweet, blessed hope,
However feeble,
That away in the vast unknown.
In Thine own dominion,
Our God-created spirits
May know Thee as thou art.
May serve Thee, Lord, aright,
And be content.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